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Antony, M.

ADDRESS

DELIVERED IN THE

Representatives' Hall,

AT

MILLEDGEVILLE.

ON THE THIRD DAY OF DECEMBER,

1827.

Box 1157



BY DR. MILTON ANTONY,

President of the Board of Physicians of the State of Georgia.

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Address, &c.

WHEN we advert to the past medical history of Georgia, what objects do we find, on which the mind may dwell with pleasure? What instructing or interesting in Medical Science arrests our attention?—What is there from which we may draw one gleam of satisfaction in the retrospect?

Alas! we look into a wilderness—a wilderness on which nature has indeed bestowed her bounties—We look on a land on which she seems to have lavished her gifts with a prodigal hand, but they might as well not have been. Time like a resistless torrent has passed by and left them in eternal night. We and our ancestors have looked into forests, fields and meadows, and beheld them laden with all of vegetation which was valuable and beautiful—They have vegetated, blossomed, and died! They have reproduced, generation after generation—They have continued to shoot forth with the genial breath of spring, and sink into death with the rude and chilling blasts of winter, and the footsteps of Medical Science are scarcely to be traced in all the land.

If an Abbot, a Bibb and a Lee have sojourned awhile in this delightful land, who have shed a diamond lustre about them for a time, the record they have sought, has been the hearts of their personal friends, or the annals of political fame; and their traces in Medical Science have been as the tracks of the weary traveller on the light and desert sands of Africa—dear indeed, to the travelling companion who follows immediately after; but the Simoon blast of time has blown—the sands have moved—the traces are effaced forever!—Although the wide-spreading Indian Ocean may beat her Eastern, and the deep-rolling Atlantic her Western shore—Although the Mediterranean may roll her resistless waves on the north, and the vast Nile flow from the heights of Donga to Alexandria, yet the dry sands of her deserts yield obedience to the dismal blast, and each trace becomes as though it had not been.

Such, my friends, appears the Medical History of Georgia—Across it, as across the map of Tropical Africa, we seem to behold in large and glaring letters the inscription, "*unknown parts.*"

Contemplating on this humiliating retrospect, the mind is naturally led to enquire into the cause of such dearth of science—such want of character, and such general neglect of the subjects of scientific investigation with which providence has surrounded us.

Whilst the calls of philanthropy have been loud, the bounty of nature has been paramount.

Instead of beholding health and longevity wafted to us by the perfumed breezes of Tropical groves, we have suffered the Sirocco

of the East, bearing in its course disease, pain, and death, with their thousand stings. We have beheld our cities, villages and cottages teeming with diseases, often spreading desolation far and wide; spreading their spoliations, not only amongst our fortunes, but amongst the best feelings and enjoyments of our nature—doing violence alike to the serene pleasures of parental affection and conjugal bliss. On whatever hand we turn our eyes, we behold the weeds of grief. Our melancholy catalogue of distressed widows and helpless orphans loudly speaks the mortality of our diseases; and so common are the habiliments of woe, that they have become the fashionable costume of the State.

If we turn another leaf in the book of nature, we behold the vegetable and mineral kingdoms of our State yielding almost every natural production necessary for the healing of those diseases which are curable; but not one article of them has become a commodity of commercial importance, as prepared for medicinal purposes, because science has not yet spread her illuminating rays around: the Botanist and Mineralogist have not yet publicly noticed the existence and importance of such things.

It is a truth not to be denied, that we have had many gentlemen of our profession to locate and labor amongst us, commencing their medical career with high expectations, founded on a valuable store of genius and acquirements; they have engaged in the cause of humanity, fame, science and fortune, with the warmest zeal; but they have soon swerved from these important purposes, and have been forced to turn to trade for fortune, politics for fame, abandon the cause of medical science, and turn a deaf ear to the calls of humanity.

Fame, fortune, and philanthropy are the great incitants of physicians; and of these, the two former seem to be the most generally operative. But, my fellow-citizens, and my brethren will pardon me, whilst I state the facts, that no field of fame has been opened to the devotees of medicine; fortune, even competence, has been placed beyond their grasp, and heaven-born philanthropy has been blighted in its bud by want of that competence necessary to its useful displays, or has failed to be cherished into valuable growth, from a want of the genial influences of the christian religion on the moral faculties of physicians.

Recently a few valuable papers have been afforded to the journals—a pamphlet or two, and one book!—These are, I believe, to this day, the only written testimonials to tell the rising generation that physicians have resided in Georgia. These, it may be remarked, have been the productions of the professional youth of their authors. Observations had not yet been made on the great disproportion between mental and corporeal labor and distress, and their just compensation in fame and fortune—the cheering beams of hope still brightened their professional horizon—her invigorating influences had not yet been worn down by repeated disappointment—doubt of success had seldom entered into their minds, and they still felt the inspiration of zeal and the impulse of devotion to

the cause. But if we search for one memento, the production of advanced years, combined with continued and extensive observation and experience, we shall search in vain.

Let us, for a moment, turn our attention to the political annals of the State. Here we find physicians in abundance, rapidly ascending the hill of fame, and proving themselves men of minds capable of achieving ends of the highest importance in their profession, had they continued with undivided attention in its service.

If we look into our congressional annals, we rarely find the period when medical gentlemen have not constituted an important part of our representation. Look into the commercial, the agricultural, the military, and the forensic departments, and we still find physicians who have been forced to seek fame and fortune in these; having abandoned their profession at, or before the prime of life.

The chief remote cause of this erratic disposition of our profession, and the consequent deficiency of medical character, is easily discerned by the practitioner who has for many years trod the path of experience. To such, no cause of an effect is more plain than that the want of *State patronage* has been the operative one in the production of these circumstances.

Until very recently, we have been placed far from the seats of medical science. We have been central to eight hundred thousand square miles lying between *Lexington* on the North, *Cape Sable* on the South, *Baltimore* on the East, and the *Sabine* on the West; in the whole of which vast extent, not one Medical Seminary was to be found, nor one society really valuable for the dissemination of medical knowledge. We have consequently suffered a privation of the opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge which such institutions afford, and the incentives to great exertion arising out of the presence of those who reared up in, or converged together by them.

Nor should we stop here in the enumeration of causes arising out of the want of *State patronage*. From the first settlement of the State, until very recently, there has been no protection of the rights of physicians. Ours having for many years been a frontier State, possessing a vast body of unsettled lands, it has necessarily been subjected to a perpetual change of its population, and a continued influx of strangers from other States and Nations, consisting chiefly of illiterate poor, or enterprising merchants, mechanics, agriculturists, &c. &c. who, being ignorant of characters, and incapable of judging of professional merit, have adopted the custom of calling for the practitioner who might throw himself most in their way; and thus has the charlatan, by his greater forwardness and unblushing boastings, been the more abundantly patronised, whilst the laborious and retired student and honest practitioner, has suffered a want of support, or been driven into such continued and extreme fatigue and exertion to procure it, as to deprive him of all leisure for scientific research—ultimately so to endanger his health as to disgust him with his profession, and thus force him into other occupations.

There are two other great obstacles to the progress of Medical Science, which operate by consuming the time of physicians, which are within legislative reach, and to which the attention of that honorable body is respectfully invited. One is the great proportion of poor within the State, who are illy provided for; and who, from their bad living are the more sickly, as well as numerous part of our population. This interesting portion of the community is always needing, and often meriting the careful attention of physicians. And such is the nature of their necessities—such their helpless condition, that the practitioner is a brute, and not deserving the name of one who ministers in a humane calling, who does not feel bound to sympathise with, and labor for them. Nor do his feelings, time and labor constitute all his losses; for he often finds them so destitute of fuel, food, and raiment, as to render success impossible, without at the same time contributing such portions of money as will procure the comforts immediately needed. Nor is there, for all these, any thing like an arrangement in existence, whereby the practitioner can draw one cent of reward or remuneration.

My hearers will doubtless experience much surprise when I state to them, that it is not less true than strange, that, small as the proportion of practitioners is to the general population, when we consider their time, labour, medicine and money, *they contribute more to charity* than all other individuals of all grades and professions together. The other, is the compulsion to discharge militia and jury duties. Notwithstanding they pay a tax extraordinary for the purpose of securing to them the privileges of their profession, still they are subjected to a loss of one or two months in the year, because the privileges for which they are taxed are not secured to them.

The law passed in 1825, restricting the practice of medicine to those who have been well prepared, cannot operate to the pecuniary benefit of physicians of the present age; because our State has been almost the last in establishing this restriction—the consequence of which is, that as impostors have fled from test-boards elsewhere, our State has continued to afford them an asylum, until it has become replete. The Board established by that law, may therefore be considered as labouring for the medical character of the State, and for the pecuniary benefit of the next generation of physicians.

I well recollect, that some twenty years ago, a vigorous effort was made by respectable physicians of the State, to procure the passage of a law calculated to protect the interest of physicians and of the community, by the establishment of a tribunal, the ordeals of which should soundly test the qualifications of those who should thereafter desire to commence practice in this State; and had that laudable zeal then succeeded, I hesitate not to say, that at the present period, the medical character of the State would have been widely different from what we now find it. But at that time the people seemed not to have drawn a distinction between the liberty of virtue and the liberty of vice—the liberty of the qual-

nied and that of the unqualified. Such a restriction seemed to them an unjust curtailment of some one's liberty ; and they seem not to have reflected, that whilst they were tenacious of the liberties and pecuniary benefits of a few impostors, they were neglecting their guardianship over the best interests of the general community, and leaving their property and their lives to be swindled from them by a parcel of vultures and jackalls. The country, however, was comparatively new, and her citizens inexperienced and uninformed—Darkness pervaded almost every department—A few bright stars of science bespangled our firmament, but their scattering beams were lost in the darkness of ignorance which yet lingered about the land—A midnight scene had passed, in which the sons of revelry delighted to sally forth in search of pleasures only, whilst the bright Aurora of intellect still slept beyond the eastern hills—To this scene had succeeded only the oblique rays of twilight, spreading over us a partial day.

I have said 'the next generation of physicians.' Yes, the present generation is but a new one, and another will soon succeed it. Look around the State, and you will scarcely find the physician who, twenty years ago wept over suffering humanity, or poured libations before the temple of Esculapius. Alas ! desolate are their mansions ! They have spent their sleepless nights—they have dropped the rich tears of sympathy—they have early retired from the stage of life ; and the knowledge and remembrance of them is recorded—only in the faithful bosoms of a few surviving relatives and personal friends—leaving, in many instances their orphaned families destitute of competent support. They have retired, and with them, their extensive and valuable observations, and we are left to tread the same wine-press of experience.

But, whilst the senior members of the profession have been thus falling around us, our country has basked under the vivifying influences of a republican banner. It has become civilised—its citizens improved, and its legislators enlightened.

The day has now arrived when our statesmen are capable of taking comprehensive views of the general weal—when they see alike the propriety of guarding the interests of the general community and cherishing the sciences.

Glancing at the history of the world, we find these are the legitimate effects of such a state of things. We find every thing which is valuable and liberal in the sciences, and more noble in the arts, and every thing truly noble in human character, has been the production of that philanthropy which belongs to republicanism, either in individuals or in State institutions : and on the contrary, that all that is contracted, selfish, ignorant, and base, have been the production of high-toned despotism. For the proof of this, we have only to turn our eyes on Spain and Africa.

The ancient republics have yielded Orators and Patriots, whose examples have thus far withstood the reign of darkness, and will continue to stand, whilst generation succeeds generation, and century succeeds century, the patterns of excellence to all mankind :

whilst their other acts have withstood the dilapidations of ruthless time, and more ruthless tyranny, even down to the new republics.

Of Medicine, in particular, in those days, we have not much to say; because luxury had not yet spread her baleful influence over, nor enervating ease and indolence filled the world with their legitimate offspring, human misery.

Passing down the stream of time, we have little to interest us in this enquiry, through successive ages of despotism, dark superstition and intolerance, until we arrive at the sixteenth century.

About this time England, though monarchical, was tolerant, and extended much liberty to her citizens, and much patronage to professors of Medicine—She made their rank honorable and their labours profitable—She chartered the London College of Physicians; securing to them certain privileges which were “calculated to raise the reputation of the profession, and prevent the people from being imposed upon by bold and ignorant adventurers, who had before sported with their lives and robbed them of their money.”

In the succeeding century, the College Royal of Physicians in Scotland was established by patent of Charles II, with similar privileges and benefits. Ireland adopts the precedent. The reward to the United Kingdom has been, that she has given birth to the first dawn of philosophy in medicine. Here in the seventeenth century the immortal Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood, without the knowledge of which the science could never have prospered.

To this we might add a long catalogue of those important discoveries in Anatomy, Physiology, Chemistry, Pathology and Therapeutics, which opened the door to the modern reformers, Cullen, Brown, Hunter, Darwin, Black, Cavendish, Sir Humphry Davy, &c. whose names are held in grateful remembrance by all true friends of Medical Science.

Whilst Italy, and other petty monarchies of the Continent were sinking into oblivion, and only continued to afford the faint emblems of hereditary science and arts,—retaining some of the habits of freedom and independent thought, which however, were still in the wane, and shewing themselves only like the last glimmerings of an expiring taper, in the occasional discovery of a fact, as the valves of the veins by Fabricius ab Aquapendente, the lacteals by Asellius, &c.—liberal patronage in England was thus producing its fruits in an increasing ratio.

With the dawn of republicanism in America, we find a Rush, a Physic, and a Wistar, early embarking in the mazes which surrounded our Science, and dispelling the mists from before our eyes.

Fired by the example of American liberty, Napoleon, who had wrested France from the hands of matchless tyranny, glowing with republican enthusiasm, commenced his reform in every department; and has left the indelible traces of his footsteps in the field, the senate, the forum, and the college; but above all, and what pecu-

liarily interests us in the present enquiry, he extended a patronage to our Science unparalleled in any nation.—He established Academies, Colleges and Hospitals; endowed Professorships liberally, and employed gentlemen of the first talents and energies in the improvement of the different branches of Medicine, undisturbed by the toils and perplexities of a complicated business—Franked his schools, so as to draw into them all the native genius of France, however poor and obscure of birth, and liberally rewarded every one in proportion to his merits. Behold the consequences!—Previously, at least half a century behind the Science of Great Britain, she now presents to the world her proud list of Richerand, Dupuytren, Pinel, Bichat, Beclard, Larrey, Lis Franc, Magendie, &c. &c.—She has raised for herself a character for Medical Science, which not only commands the high respect of all nations, but which compels us to look to her for almost every thing which is new and valuable in Medicine. We are not only receiving from her a continued series of facts and theories in Medicine, Surgery, Chemistry, Physiology, &c. &c.—But when we look on the present happy condition of the profession in France, we are daily expecting such a developement of facts and independent thought, as shall lay the foundation of a revolution in all natural philosophy. A revolution which must ere long burst forth from some quarter, with all that splendor, that noon-day brilliance which belongs to truth; dazzling all former theory, and sinking into eternal oblivion all that complexity which abounds in the errors, even of the present day; and like the light of creation, discovering at once to the mind of man, the simplicity, the beauty, the grandeur, and the sublimity with which the Supreme Architect of the Universe rolls on the perpetual tide of cause and effect—Simple, because all its parts are the product of one physical agent as a cause—Beautiful, because of perfect regularity and proportion, harmony and elegance—Grand, because of its universality, overflowing the imagination of man with its immensity—And sublime, in elevating the mind above circumambient objects, to the contemplation of Him who first said “Let there be light.”

No matter if Napoleon did yield up his native republican views to the hereditary spirit of vassalage in France, and assume that despotism he found necessary for the government of those over whom he had to reign—no matter if he gloried in victory and sighed in banishment—no matter if at last he was conquered by the treachery of pretended friends and superior physical force, and finally languished out the remnant of his days on St. Helena—And no matter, if now, when he is no more, the voice of fame exclaims “Tyrant!” Still he forsook not his plighted vows to Science; and doubtless I speak the sentiments of my enlightened brethren of the profession, when I say that, notwithstanding all her scientific productions have been veiled for months and years by a language not generally known in Great Britain and America, France has, during the last twenty-five years, effected more for our Science than all the world beside:* and that these things are the result of Napoleon’s policy, the leading feature of which was the

* Sir Humphry Davy alone excepted.

extension to it of the cherishing influences of *State patronage*—A policy, the excellent effects of which were so fully developed before the end of the Emperor's reign, as to supply his army with talents of the first order, and to cause itself to be amply cherished by the monarchs who succeeded him, whatever may have been the desires of retrenchment.

Let these examples suffice to impress on our minds the value of *State patronage*.

America, more than France, has the materials for independent thought ; and I blush not to say, that Georgia has a liberal share of valuable intellectual soil, unproductive *only* from the causes above alluded to.

As my object on this occasion is not merely to fulfil their appointment by coming before them with an anniversary address, but to promote in some humble degree, the interests of the community, and of the profession of which we are members, my brethren of the Board will pardon me whilst I digress from the ordinary course on such occasions.

On the subject of *State patronage*, I would address my fellow-citizens generally, because by it they are intended to be benefited ; and because, in our happy government, they are the sovereign power—But you, fellow-citizens of the Legislature particularly, because from amongst them, you are chosen their worthy and authorised agents ; and you are those to whom they look for the protection of their interests, and the security of their happiness and prosperity.

The science of medicine is a progressive one. So changed is it within the last eighty years, that scarcely are the land marks left to tell us what it was. During this period, more has been accomplished in it than had been in all past time from the earliest history.—It now presents to the mind of man, monuments of genius and laborious research, wonderful and admirable. There can be no perfection in some of its branches, short of perfect knowledge of all cause and effect, which can never belong to the limited intellect of man. But under proper auspices, progressive improvement, and consequently a nearer approach to that knowledge will be made.

Looking still forward my fellow-citizens, as we most earnestly do, for a much nearer approach of man to God, by a greater knowledge of His works and His truths, we feel that it is peculiarly incumbent on physicians to examine those works, and discover those truths, so far at least as they are concerned in the various branches of Natural Philosophy, because there is not that branch of Natural Philosophy which is not more or less directly connected with the duties of the physician.

If then you regard as of great importance, the general cause of humanity, or the professional character of the State whose guardians you are, or the best temporal interests of those whom you represent, turn your attention to what is now the true state of

Medical Science—to the removal of those causes which, on a closer examination, may be found to have retarded its progress within this State—to the promotion of those means which may open the door to its progressive improvement—and finally, to the promotion to every possible extent, of those institutions which may reasonably be expected to result in the abundant improvement of the genius of our own country.

Some of the chief of the former objects of attention, have been already enumerated. On the subject of the latter, we feel it a duty to suggest a few ideas in this place.

Our sister State, South-Carolina, has recently established a Medical College, which, from its great natural advantages, added to the exalted talents and laudable zeal of its Faculty, is at once better suited to the necessities of those who are preparing for Southern practice, than any other College in the world; and should therefore be considered our College, and used as such.

But we should have a regular system of private instruction at home: because, at present, young gentlemen aspiring to the profession of medicine, are apt to turn to the nearest practitioner for their private studies, and shape their character by the very limited library, the prejudices, and the peculiar views of their preceptor.

As a remedy for these inconveniences and injuries to the Science of Medicine, and to the community, I would respectfully suggest the propriety of establishing a Medical Academy within our State, on the following plan:

Erect at the expense of the State, in Augusta or Savannah, an edifice with suitable apartments for study, boarding, laboratory, lectures, &c. for the accommodation of one hundred pupils. Appoint a proper number of physicians, (say two or three,) of high moral character and professional zeal and acquirements, whose duty it shall be to direct the regular reading of the students—deliver regular lectures on all the various branches of medicine, in such manner as to give two complete courses in each year—to examine each pupil daily or semi-weekly, in such manner as to allow no part of his regular reading to pass, without ensuring the formation of correct ideas therefrom. Support these appointments by such salaries as will command the best talents, by enabling the first practitioners to take so much of their time from their other professional engagements, as may be necessary for the faithful discharge of those duties. Supply a competent medical library and chemical apparatus, and a steward whose duty it shall be to furnish plain board for all who will board in the institution. Support the steward by a salary worth his services as such. Let the rate of board be determined by the bill of fare, i. e. divide the cost of all the consumables by the number of students, and let each one pay his proportion of the expense. This will reduce the board from the common high price of that item in the medical student's expenses, down to the bare cost of what he actually consumes. Let his other expenses be \$100 per annum, for the privileges and benefits of

the institution, which is only the common price of private pupilage, and less than the common price of tickets to *one course* of lectures.

Certainly it may be said that, on this plan, the Institution will not only be an expense to the State at the outset, but an annually repeated charge for steward's and professor's salaries. This fact, though not so terrible as may at first sight appear, we admit to some extent. But this will annually diminish, as the school grows in reputation, and its patronage consequently increases.

Let us examine the reasonableness of the view we have taken, by supposing that the number of students will, within a very short time, amount to forty, (which we think a very reasonable estimate, as there is, without doubt, that number of medical students at this time in Georgia, besides a considerable number who, so soon as the institution gains a name, may be calculated on from other States,) each paying \$100, would make an annual income of 4000 dollars, which would probably pay for the services of instruction.

Let us suppose the steward's salary is \$400. Now if we divide this amount by 40, the number of students, we find that by exacting a ten dollar fee in annual advance of each student, in addition to his cost of consumables; we shall raise the steward's salary out of the students, and afford them board at as little as 70 to 90 dollars; less than half the cheapest board in towns, and altogether little more than half the present expenses of private pupilage, with much better opportunities; and afford them two courses of lectures for about one half the cost of one course in a medical college.

Having taken a hasty view of the fiscal concerns of the Institution in contemplation, we will define its powers.

Let there be an annual examination on the first Monday in October, to test the progress of the students, and confer the degree of *Bachelor of Medicine* on all who are believed worthy of the degree of *Doctor of Medicine*.

Thus will such receive their first degree, in time to visit any college in the Union, the same fall; and by an arrangement which (we doubt not) may be made with some one of the Colleges, receive the second degree the following Spring.

On this plan it is believed, that two to three years will accomplish more for the well prepared student of genius and zeal, than double that time under the present want of arrangements.

We have said we doubted not, that an arrangement might be made with some one of the Medical Colleges, whereby the degree of M. D. might be conferred on the Bachelors of our school, after attending one course of lectures only. We believe this opinion will be found a very reasonable one, when we analyze the subject. Let us examine its claims.

There are but two leading reasons why Colleges require students to attend two courses of lectures, viz :

1st. That they may, with the more certainty, acquire a competent knowledge of the profession.

2d. That the institution may receive competent support.

Remove both these reasons, and the law predicated on them will be yielded up by any body of liberal-minded men.

In reply to the 1st. we say 1st. That we believe the plan suggested for private instruction, if well executed, better calculated for minute instruction, and particularly for obtaining the ideas of various authors, than that of College lectures only, because it embraces means which cannot be embraced in a professor's lectures.

And 2d. That it is proposed to send none from this Institution to College, but such as are considered by a competent Board,* worthy the degree of M. D. before they leave the academy.

To the 2d reason we reply : That the College so agreeing would lose nothing, but derive, on the contrary, actual benefit from such an arrangement. This will be apparent when we reflect, that not one half of the students of Georgia, and a still less proportion of those who may ultimately be expected to attend the Academy, visit any *one* College ; and but very few indeed attend the same College more than once, but prefer taking their second-course in another.

Thus it may be easily seen, that more than double, and perhaps thrice the number of students, would be sent from the State to the College thus agreeing, that would otherwise attend it. This effect would be ensured by the very circumstances of the agreement, viz: That under the arrangement, only the time and expense of one winter would be necessary to procure the degree of M. D. for the *pupils of the Academy*, whilst elsewhere, one year's time and expense *additional* would be required.

In conclusion on this subject, we will revert a moment to the State expense. We have admitted that in the beginning and rise of the Institution, there would be an expense to the State—And now we would ask, who are to be benefited by the Institution ? It is not the members of the profession in the State at present.

So far otherwise indeed, is the fact, that the more talent brought into operation in the State, the more will their profits be lessened, because of the increase of worthy competition. But it is the population of the State at large whom you represent, and of whose interests you are the proper guardians, who, and who alone, are to receive the benefits. They are to receive them in all the endearing departments of life. 'Tis wives, husbands, parents, children, friends and servants, who are to be substantially and particularly

* Let that be the Medical Board of the State for the time being.

benefited: the Medical character of your state advanced by the promotion of Medical science, and its wealth increased by retaining within it, at least one half or two thirds of the money otherwise annually expended in foreign parts for the acquisition of Medical knowledge.

For embracing the present opportunity of presenting you with a crude outline of a course for improving Medical Science within this State, we have no apology to offer you, but a sense of duty to which we hope ever to be found obedient. We now leave it to the ordeal of your own judgments.

I congratulate you my brethren of the Board---I congratulate the enlightened members of the profession generally, and the community at large, on that first display of State patronage which, in 1825, established the Board, on the duties of which we are now assembled.

Late as it is that this patronage is extended to our profession, it is genial as the cheering rays of Aurora on the verdant landscapes of May.

I hail it as the first interesting era in the Medical history of Georgia, and as an omen of the happy rise of professional character from the ashes of obscurity in which it has hitherto dragged on a miserable existence, (if indeed an existence it may be called,) to a level with that of the sister States, and of the other enlightened nations of the earth.

Our Legislature has opened a portal through which we look into a vast uncultivated plain, which has in the distance, the eminence of fame and usefulness. It now becomes our duty to enter, and labour faithfully in the field, paving the way to the goal in view---The work before us is various and extensive. Let us be faithful and industrious; and as the mild rays of morning soon ripen into meridian splendor, illuminating, warming, and cherishing the well cultivated plains below, so as to perfect the harvest, so doubtless, as we shew a good cultivation of the talents given us, will our legislature directed by a wise and kind Providence, spread her fostering wings over, protect and strengthen us.

As members of a high and responsible calling; as professors of those branches of Natural Philosophy which are decidedly the most important to the community, it becomes us to attend particularly to all things which are calculated to procure and maintain for our profession, a character every way dignified in proportion to its real worth.

Industrious effort, and a steady regard for moral rectitude must be combined with great zeal for the advancement of our science, and a constant desire for the increase of our own knowledge.

When we enter upon a medical life, we should feel as if we were entering upon holy ground---We should feel as if we were entering on a life of much self-denial, and relinquishment of worldly pleasures, and a life of servitude to the community in which we live.

In this life, our primary object should be the promotion of the safety and happiness of our fellow-creatures; our secondary object, the decent maintenance of our families; and the ternary object the advancement of our Science.

Relative to your peculiar duties as a Board for testing the qualifications of those who come forward to the practice of medicine, I am happy, by the experience and acquaintance of one session, to know that I need not say much.

The great prudence, good feeling, and depth of professional ability displayed during that session, are worthy to stand as precedents for your future imitation, whilst they warrant perpetuity and success to the Institution entrusted to your care. Nor is it but justice to you as individuals, and as members of the Board, to state in this place, that by avoiding every display of political feeling and sentiment, and devoting yourselves during your deliberations, entirely to professional duty, you have proven yourselves incapable of error in the latter---from difference of opinion and feeling in the former. You have made medicine and politics entirely distinct branches of science, by keeping in view that "the commonwealth of medicine is of *no party*."*

I well know your good feeling towards candidates for license, and your ardent desire that each should acquit himself well, and receive the reward which awaits the worthy. But allow me to say to you, that whilst every good and kind feeling towards candidates is desirable to justice on one hand, this will lead you into great error on the other, without the countervailing influence of the consideration, that at the same time, you stand as the life-guards of this community; and that your decisions are of the greatest importance to their property and their lives.

In order to be enabled the better to judge of the merits of candidates, and ensure their good preparation previous to their presenting themselves, I would remind you, that your sessions as a test tribunal are not proper seasons for the *instruction* of candidates: and consequently, that it may be well to dispense with that practice during the examinations, into which the ability to do so, and the kind feeling of some of the members have heretofore occasionally led them. Let the only business of the Board with candidates, (at least, until after decision on their cases) be to ascertain the qualifications they possess, and dispose of them accordingly.

Another duty to our profession, as well as to the community, (as a Board,) if in your opinion the law which established the Board, admits of such exercise of sound discretion, requires not only that you weary not in your endeavors to ascertain the qualifications of candidates, and that you pass none but such as, by their acquirements and zeal, prove themselves capable of safe and useful practice; but that you consider all qualifications and acquirements *nothing*, without the accompaniment of *good moral character*.

Before taking leave of the subject of your duties as a Board, I would remind you that most of us are at a considerable distance from our families, and our other professional obligations; and that whilst we are willing to submit to painful privations for the purpose of giving all the time and attention here, absolutely necessary for the best possible discharge of the duties to which we are called; still, in order that we may the sooner be returned to the enjoyment of our homes and our families, where alone the toils of life are lost in ease and comfort; and that we may the sooner resume our other labours in the cause of humanity, we trust that each member will feel it his duty to give his whole time to the business of the Board.

Your chief other obligation to the profession, (though not strictly to the Board) includes every effort which can possibly contribute to the immediate advancement of the Science.

The character of the profession will certainly be improved by your passing such candidates only, as are well prepared; but the improvement of the Science, can only be effected by the direction of your attention and labors to the acquisition and distribution of knowledge: and for these purposes the *Central Medical Society of Georgia*, formed by you at the first session of the Board, is well calculated.

By the formation of that society, you have afforded facilities for the interchange of ideas and information between the members from all parts of the State, and for collecting and examining the products of genius, which heretofore, for want of a point of convergence, have not only remained in obscurity, but have been lost forever. You have prepared a field not hitherto before the medical public of the state, which with due management, will nourish into valuable growth that professional zeal which has hitherto been deficient in this State, and stimulate to emulous effort in scientific research many who would otherwise live and die but routinists.

I congratulate you gentlemen, on the happy disposition for association and improvement in the Science which has caused the formation of that Society. In it you have a voluntary assemblage of members of a respectable, a liberal, and an honorable profession,—not, I hope, with mercenary views—not for the purpose of considering it as regards its emoluments to those who labor in its fields—not for the purpose of pledging yourselves to stipulated prices for professional services,—but, with the exalted motive of advancing its other interests as a high branch of Science; of advancing the general literary, and particularly the Medical character of the State.

Nor is this all—I trust it is the honest intention of each one of you, by this association to cultivate in a more eminent degree, those social virtues which are so indispensable to the peace, harmony, welfare, happiness, and character of each of you as brothers of the same profession;—virtues which are calculated to give you character as men and as philosophers—to render you more emin-

only useful to your fellow beings, and to gild the evening horizon of your latter days with those benign felicities which alone can render them desirable to man.

But for a spirit of pure ingenuousness ; but for a social and brotherly disposition ; but for a willingness for affable communicativeness, and a free disposition to impart to each other the products of your observations and your reasonings, your attempts at useful association will be vain and futile. They will appear before the world *only* as idle pretences to something, and will be remembered *only* as evidences of your want of those qualities as men and as philosophers, which alone could enable you to accomplish it.

Emulation to excellence in every thing which is calculated to honourably aid and adorn the professional man, will, I hope, be the polar star of each associate ; and if it should, I will vouch for your success in Medical Science, and your happiness as social brethren.

But in the exercise of a spirit of emulation you must be careful that jealousy and envy be not allowed to enter into your associations.

Should this unfortunately be the case, enmity and hatred will enter in quick succession ; a baneful spirit of opposition to every thing, right or wrong, will haunt your deliberations and debates ; your efforts will end without fruition, and your otherwise prosperous harvest be marred into unprofitable and loathsome chaff.

I look on the formation of the *Central Medical Society* as no trivial movement. A noble purpose is proposed to be effected.—The field before you is vast in extent ; the invitations to it eminently exhilarating : no less than the prospect of a nearer approach to God, by a greater knowledge of his works and his truths ; no less than a general change in almost all the philosophy of life and of disease.

My cordial, my ardent desire is that you may be zealous in your exertions to promote the grand objects of this association, and that in those exertions liberality, generosity and candour may preside as guardian spirits of your intentions and operations.

There is before you a great physical cause,* which demands your observation and your investigation, and to which I invite your attention as the richest of worldly treasures. A cause of which, important as it is to all true philosophy, at present little more is known than a few of its many laws and some of its isolated phenomena.

It is a cause in itself so wisely endowed ; so minute, so delicate, and yet so vast, so powerful, so universal, that the very contemplation of it in its incalculable minuteness and delicacy, as well as its power and ubiquity, must necessarily overwhelm the

* Electricity.

mind of man with sublimity and admiration. A cause every way indicative of the wisdom, power, extent and benignity of the Almighty God, who, by its instrumentality created, and continually preserves a *Universe*! A cause which, being by His Almighty will cast into chaos, produced order out of confusion, and life and motion out of primeval stillness and repose! A cause which seems proximate to the *great intellectual cause* of all causes, and which is itself, not only proximate, but final! A cause generally operating throughout all the subjects of all the kingdoms of nature; not a cause of a moment or an hour, as a spark from a prime conductor or a thunder storm; but a first cause, (under God,) of all existences! Eternal† as matter! beginning with, accompanying, inhabiting and acting on all of it, from the simplest geological or ærial atom, throughout all mineral, vegetable and animal natures up to the incomprehensibly extended universe itself! A cause competent to the production of all effects, from the most delicate chemical experiment in a test phial, up to the retention of Jupiter in his orbit—competent to the production of the slightest colic sensation, or the movement of a hair, or fanning us with the gentlest summer evenings zephyr; to the production of the tempest which uproots the forests, and rolls the vast, the ponderous deep into mountain billows; or the lurid thunder storm which turns the noon day glare into twilight darkness, and in one little instant rends in twain the towering oak of centuries! A cause which in less than one minute, whilst “distant falling mountains” thundered the dismal requiem, could engulf in one vast, one horrible Atlantic grave, a populous city!‡ Could overwhelm for seventeen centuries a Pompeii, and perhaps forever a Herculaneum and a Stabia in one mighty blazing ruin; one boiling tide of sulphur, salt, bitumen, iron scum, in hundred torrents rolling on resistless! and make an

“Etna roar with dreadful ruins nigh,
 “Then hurl a bursting cloud of cinders high,
 “Involved in smoking whirlwinds to the sky; }
 “With loud disposure to the starry frame,
 “Shoot fiery globes and furious floods of flame.”§

Roll on resistless tide of time! Thou great matrix of years, centuries and epochs! Roll on the happy period, when philosophy shall be added to inspiration to establish the great truths of Divinity, and man shall approach nearer to God by a correct knowledge of His character—when we shall cease to wonder at effects, from our ignorance of their physical cause—but when every mind shall bask in perpetual love, ecstacy and admiration, on each contemplation of His mercy, wisdom and power!

We come now to the last and greatest of our duties, and those with which all others should operate in sweet concert; I mean our duties to God.

It is a lamentable and deplorable fact, that so generally has *infidelity* prevailed amongst physicians that, in public estimation it

† It is not intended here to say that either matter, or the physical cause spoken of was without beginning, or that either of them will be without end; but the paucity of the language requires the use of this word to mean that the cause spoken of was created at least as early, and will at least be lasting as matter.

‡ Port Royal. § Wharton.

has become identified with the name of the profession ; and Quacks have thought they could not be considered physicians until they had openly professed infidelity ! This character of the profession has induced many a worthy, pious citizen to withhold his son of much promise, from the study of a profession which he honestly believed would contribute to the eternal ruin of his offspring.

But I am thrice happy in being able thus publicly to state, that there is nothing in the nature of our profession, which is necessarily conducive to such a state of mind. So far otherwise indeed is the fact, that it seems to me, the mind which is well informed in the various philosophy of our science, and is capable of contemplating on the wisdom, order, harmony and beauty of thousands of subjects of nature presented to its view—on the perfect adaptation of cause to effect, and these to the purposes of life—to the prevention or removal of those things which tend to produce disease and death—in a word, the whole economy of nature, from the simplest subject of botanical investigation, up to the perpetuation of human life itself, and its connexions again with *Satellites, Comets, Planets and Suns* ; the mind I say capable of these contemplations, and can deny the existence of a creating, and continually preserving power—in short a God, who superintends, causes or allows all events, must labor under, at least, a very considerable derangement of its judging faculty.

And when the experienced practitioner reflects on the endless variety and perpetuity of human miseries he is called to witness, the general fallacy of human designs for worldly happiness, the impotency of human power, both physical and moral, and the abundant overrulings of Providence, where his own reasonings have appeared most plain and conclusive ; when, to use the language of Cuvier, “ he beholds a female in the state of youth and health, her form round and pleasant, her movements graceful and supple, her warmth genial, her cheeks tinctured with the roses of pleasure, her eyes sparkling with love or the fire of genius, her countenance enlivened by sallies of wit, or animated by the glow of passion—every grace and every charm united to render her a being the most enchanting ; he beholds again, and one instant has sufficed to destroy the fond allusion ! Without any apparent cause, motion and feeling have ceased—her body has lost its warmth—the beautiful roundness of her muscles has shrunk away, and her bones appear in angular jettings—her eyes have become dull, her cheeks and lips livid ! These are the harbingers of a change even more horrible ! Her flesh passes to blue, green, or black ! Dissolving into moisture, one portion evaporates in foul emanations, another melts into putrid sanies, which also hastens to dissipate itself in the air ! In a word, at the end of a few days only, there remains visible, nothing but a few earthly and saline principles ! ” When he sees the dying christian recline his head softly on his pillow of faith and

“ Breathe his life out sweetly there ; ”

which, in the perfectly honest moment of death shews that it possesses the wonderful and desirable power of guiding him safely

through that last, solemn, closing scene; and that it is the surety of his kind reception into the presence of his God, where he is to bask in all eternity in unalloyed bliss; and when again he sees the vain and proud infidel chilled in the iron grasp of death; still ineffectually exerting his expiring powers to ward off the impending and certain fate—and that, not for the enjoyments of this world, but because he has no eye of faith by which he can see through the gloomy vale of death, into the bright effulgence of eternal glory; because he sees no pleasures blooming on the borders of his grave, nor cheering joys springing around his truly woful bed of death, nor even one fancied hope to shield him from the wrath of God! When I say he reflects on or witnesses these scenes, (which are so common in the profession,) even putting revelation aside, and giving reason her reign, he must say, that God is not God, because his works and providences are not wise, just and merciful, or *that all orders of people are made for immortality*, and that that immortality must be happy or miserable, according to the judgment of a just sovereign on that conduct || which the probationary life affords.

Taking these reflections, we find no motive nor reason—no object worthy the vast expense of wisdom and labor in the construction of a universe, and the creation of rational beings, *consistent with the attributes of God*, short of another life.

All we know, and all we can learn of man, can only tend to prove to us that this life is but a probationary moment; and when on the other side the Jordan of death, we cast back a retrospective glance, it will doubtless appear to us as a *point* in the grand scale of eternal existence, and as valuable only for having afforded the means of preparation for a better estate.

I have reflected much on the source of this trait of character, so common amongst my professional brethren, and have been induced to conclude that it is less excusable in them than in any other class of human beings; not only because I can find no reason peculiar to our profession, but because it should lead its votaries to the habit of taking enlarged views of all subjects presented to their minds; and because, in the pursuit and practice of their profession, they necessarily witness more of the displays of God's character in his works and providences than others.

But, judging by my own experience, I should say there appears to me to be two *ways*, (not rational causes,) in which this infidelity is generated, cherished and perfected; of one only will the present opportunity allow us to treat. In the study of our profession, we acquire the habit of *ocular demonstration*, and of confining our judgments too much to *tangible and visible causes*, and our *convictions to tangible and visible effects*, to the exclusion of principles abstracted from these. ¶

¶ By conduct, is not meant, acts of morality alone, but that moral and physical economy which is verily the fruits and certain accompaniments of genuine christian faith.

¶ Perhaps there may be a slight apology formed for this error in the almost innumerable false theories which have been advanced in medicine, and which it has at all times been the laborious and disagreeable duty of the medical philosopher to set aside as rubbish.

Unwatchful of ourselves as we generally are at that period of life which is devoted to studentship only, and next, to the early practice of the profession, we easily fall into scepticism; and the habit of giving corporeity to every thing * soon leads us to deny whatever is insusceptible of ocular demonstration, and consequently to the denial of spiritual existences, which is *materialism*.

Here let us examine our inconsistency and weep over our weakness. Let us remember that in our profession, we deal in those identical things, the existence of which our *false philosophy* leads us to deny: *spiritual existences*.

We know that the bodies of living men possess *life*, and that the important branches of our profession we call Physiology, and Pathology are founded on the knowledge of the different states of that *life*. Yet the substance of that *life* is insusceptible of ocular demonstration.

We know the *magnetic needle* has polarity, but we cannot make ocular demonstration of the substance of *magnetism*.

We know that *electricity* exists, and gives qualities to matter, without being itself always demonstrable to the eyes. We know that we labor to do good to our fellow creatures, and to procure sustenance by *intellect*; yet we cannot see the substance of that intellect; nor can we, by microscopical examination find a space allowed for the residence of either of them in the material substances they occupy or influence. Why then do we admit their existence? How do we become conscious of them? Not surely, by any describable nature they possess in the abstract; but solely on the evidence of their existence, afforded by their effects on matter. We can have no consciousness of *matter* itself—the God of materialists, abstracted from its qualities, and without these should deny its existence. But its qualities so sensibly prove its existence that the understanding is easily convinced of the fact, and thus we are incapable of denying it. Not less plain is the reasoning in favor of *spiritual existences*. The qualities of matter could not be without *something* to possess those qualities. Nor can the effects of *spirit* (which are the sensible qualities of this mode of living,) exist without the existence of *spirit*. But we did not dispute the existence of *life, magnetism, electricity, intellect, &c. &c.* on the least intimation of the fact, *before* we were well informed of them by studying and observing their laws and effects. We can believe a King has swayed his sceptre over a nation because we see his palace or his throne—we can believe the republic of Rome ended in the year of the world 3973, and that the Roman Empire commenced immediately after the battle of Actium the same year, under Augustus, being 31 years before Christ. We can believe that Louis XVI commenced his reign over France in 1774. We find it not less easy to believe those things which depend on the slightest intimation by the words of man. We find no difficulty in believing even an Indian tradition relative to some of the barbarities of their ancestors. We can believe and weep over a fiction of the imagination, if nature be well portrayed. Mark the inconsistency of our nature! Here we are very credulous. We implicitly be-

* Or judging of, or thinking on it only by its qualities as matter or body.

heve the word of *fallible man*, and as confidently deny the truth of the unerring and infallible God! We can deny the existence of an immortal soul, because we cannot, in our anatomical investigations, find that part which seems to have been peculiarly adapted to the residence of some *material substance*—of which *material substance* only we can conceive—and we can deny the existence, of a wise omnipotent omniscient, just and merciful God, although surrounded by His innumerable works and blessings, and although created and continually preserved by—we know not what else; thus we seem to acquire to ourselves such an intolerable share of vanity and presumption as to imagine we can “bind the sweet influences of Pleiades; loose the bands of Orion; bring forth Mazzaroth in his seasons, and guide Arcturus with his sons; that we know all the ordinances of heaven, and set the dominion thereof in the earth, and can send the lightnings,” that they may go forth and say, “behold us.”* Nay more—without spending a thought on the reasons for believing its authenticity, and without learning from its sacred pages the inherent evidences of its truth, discard at once as a fiction or an imposition that history † whose truths are more firmly substantiated than any other, and which, so far as other history goes, derives additional substantiation therefrom. That book which came “from the love and embrace of God, and was given in mercy to man and the children of men,” which discloses “to us the mysteries of hereafter and the secrets of the throne of God,” which sets open to us the gates of salvation, and shews us “the way of eternal life, hitherto unknown;” which “withholds nothing in heaven from our hope and ambition, and pours upon our earthly lot, the full horn of divine providence and consolation;” which brings to us “the fulness of the knowledge of God, and speaks welfare to us and our children”—whose “ancient residence was the bosom of God,” but which has come to occupy its throne in our hearts; which will accept of no residence “but the soul of an immortal; which would, if we would receive it, possess us of that peace which God alone can give; which calls on and entreats us, “but we refuse; which stretches out the hand of God to us, but we regard it not;” and of whose truths millions of intelligent beings of our own species, at all times for many centuries in steady succession, have borne indubitable testimony from internal evidence; and which has not only stood firm as a rock, amidst the desolating whirlwinds of infidelity which have sprung from a Phorphyry, a Hierocles, a Celsus, and an apostate Julien of ancient, and a Voltaire, a Hume, a Paine, and a Mirabeau of modern times, and I may add a Laurence of the present day, but which has flourished in immortal green, until it has spread its grateful and soul-cheering shadow over almost all the lands and seas of this planet on which we have our temporal residence; and which will continue to grow and thicken until the grand catastrophe of universal dissolution!

If then my friends, you value that which can sever your affections from perishable pleasures and fix them on imperishable ones; if you value serene pleasure in life; if you would approach

* Job, chap. xxxviii, v. 34, et seq.

† The Bible.

with ease the solemn ordeals of death and judgment ; and if you would value the smiles of a reconciled God in all eternity, seek shelter under its umbrageous foliage : seek knowledge on its pages ; examine well its authenticity, for it is well able to bear the test of scrutiny. Fear not to compromise the dignity of your wisdom ; for a Quadratus, an Aristides, and an Athenagoras of Athens, a Clemens, an Arnobius, and an Annatolius of Alexandria, and a Justin Martyr and a Tertullian of Rome have believed before you. It will arm you with the “ sacred precepts of christianity,” and thereby enable you to “ meet the King of terrors without dismay, and without a tear to bid adieu to these regions of mortality forever.

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